

THE SUNDAY AT HOME

O DAY MOST CALM, MOST BRIGHT! . . .
THE WEEK WERE DARK BUT FOR THY LIGHT.—*Herbert.*

TOM HERON OF SAX.

A STORY OF REVIVAL TIMES



"MADAM, I AM A METHODIST MYSELF."

CHAPTER XV.—RELAPSED.

SPRING had given place to summer, and summer was waning into autumn, when Tom Heron began to feel that his present life was well-nigh intolerable, and that if he could not mend matters somewhat he should be driven to distraction.

This conviction did not come suddenly upon him; it was of slow growth, and was not im-

mediately recognised. Indeed the young man fought hard against it, vowing that he had within himself that which rendered him independent of all outward aids to happiness; yet all the same, a strange deadness was stealing over his spirit; the hours spent in meditation and prayer and the reading of the Scriptures dragged heavily along, and he often found his thoughts wandering almost regretfully back to the careless days of old, in which he had had friends and to

spare, and had enjoyed life with that zest and fulness which is only possible to the young. Often he would throw aside his books, rise from his knees and dash out into the open air, striving to deaden the weary ache gnawing at his heart by violent physical exertion, and wandering about half the night before fatigue drove him home.

By day he worked at the forge, often with an energy that was almost ferocious; but it was seldom that the monotony of his toil was varied by any friendly greetings from old associates. These had at last given him up as a hopeless case, had almost ceased to be interested in him. At first Tom had said that he was glad when these visits had ceased, when he was neither cajoled nor ridiculed, but simply let alone. Now, however, he often felt that anything would be better than the complete isolation in which he found himself. Fighting of some kind was congenial to him, and standing up boldly for the righteousness of his cause had brought with it a sense of power and an exaltation of spirit which had carried him through many days and weeks of opposition that might have broken down the resolution of a weaker man. But all this was now a thing of the past. People had left off interesting themselves in the "mad Methodist," and whilst his foes had ceased their attacks from without, Tom had drawn no nearer to those who in the first days had made overtures of friendship towards him. Tom's curse through life had been a kind of wild, fierce shyness, which asserted itself in presence of certain individuals—generally, as it chanced, before the very persons with whom he would naturally have wished to stand well, and for whom he had a deep underlying respect. This shyness had been greatly intensified by the change which showed to him the evil of his past life, and had prompted him to reject with peremptory decision the gentle attempts of the Lady of Ernscliff and Mr. Latham to win his confidence and trust.

It was another phase of the same feeling which made him so reserved towards his uncle, and had all but made of little Molly a stranger to him now. He felt unworthy of the caresses of his little sister; shamed by the common-sense uprightness of the worthy blacksmith. His new ideas of religion were, as is so often the case with men of his stamp, suddenly aroused to a sense of sin, extraordinarily narrow. Because Samson, Mr. Latham, and other devout persons in Sax had never succeeded in producing any impression upon him, and because the Methodists had succeeded where others had failed, therefore Tom was absolutely certain that they, and they alone, held the truth; and more than this, he was equally certain that just those fragments of truth which had come home to his heart and had served to awaken him from his long sleep, comprised the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and he looked upon anything else as an addition of man, if not a work of the devil.

Strange as this form of bigotry seems when carefully analysed, it was common enough in those days, and is always so, indeed, to a greater or less extent. When Samson (who did not

sit for nothing under Mr. Latham Sunday by Sunday), would try, in his own rough and sturdy way, to put before Tom some arguments tending to show that, whilst he was right in what he held, others might be right too, who did not take exactly the same line, the young man would grow first excited, and then fierce, and would be so certain that his uncle was acting as an emissary of the devil to tempt him from the paths of righteousness, that the worthy smith had given him up at last in despair, and Tom's isolation gradually became almost complete.

The only bright days for him were those upon which he went up to the great house, where he was always received by the young gentlemen and servants alike with friendly good-will and cordiality. This was the only place where he was not made to feel himself an outcast, and gradually he came to look upon the Squire's house as the pleasantest spot in all the world. He ceased to be afraid that Madam's displeasure would one day rise against him. He could not believe that she was in ignorance of his opinions which had raised such a commotion in the place. Great as was the gulf which divided him from the family at Rookwood, Tom was something too much self-centred at this time to realise that his private affairs might be long in filtering down to Madam's ears. Sometimes he even flattered himself (especially since Mistress Irene had paid that secret visit to the stable, and had given him the necklace) that his example was already bearing fruit in unexpected quarters. Poor Tom: his ignorance and his self-consciousness were alike natural to one in his position, and perhaps it was well for him that he had a few cheering thoughts and brighter days, or his mind might have given way beneath the strain of loneliness and asceticism.

But, as the summer began to wane, a new disappointment and source of trouble came to Tom. Hitherto his Sundays had been happy days for him. He had spent them in Hownston amid those of his own way of thinking, and had returned refreshed and strengthened for the week about to commence.

The community at Hownston had grown and flourished: funds had been collected for the erection of a small chapel, and the building was rapidly rising. But as was so often the case then, as in other times, with prosperity came disunion, jealousy and dissension. The great split between the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists penetrated in many places to small bodies, even to individual families; and before the summer had passed, the little society at Hownston was divided against itself, and full of the most bitter hostility and enmity, each section vituperating the other, and forgetting everything but the great difference which was rending in some places the whole Methodist body into hostile camps.

With a dispute like this, Tom Heron had no kind of sympathy. He was no scholar, and the discussion of the exact signification of words and isolated texts had no kind of fascination for him. He listened in amaze whilst he heard those upon whom he had looked with veneration and respect

hurling bitter words at one another, and mutually accusing each other of leading astray the souls who looked to them for guidance. Perplexed, distressed, grieved to the heart, Tom came away from a meeting which had been nothing but a vehement and scarcely disguised quarrel from first to last, and in his heart of hearts he almost said, as he threaded his way homewards through the winding woodland paths: "Vanity of vanities—all is vanity." He had given up everything for this beautiful faith which had seemed so strong—so holy—so all-embracing. There had been mercy even for him, as held out by his teachers: yet here were these same men, or their immediate followers, ready to fly at each others' throats, and hurling passages of Scripture at one another as if they were deadly missiles—and all because, as it appeared to poor Tom, the words of the Bible could be read in so many different ways, and there was no other guide to tell them what men should believe!

As this thought came into his mind, it seemed to Tom as though the solid ground gave way beneath his feet. Well might John Wesley, in later days, declare that it was Methodist alone who would greatly hurt Methodist—that it was the strife within the community, not that from without, which would weaken the work, and alienate the flock. It had been nothing to Tom to be assailed from without. Rightly or wrongly, he had looked upon every argument as alleged by any person without the "Connexion," as a weapon of Satan in some form or another, and had braced himself fearlessly for the assault: but how, when those of his own way of thinking disagreed and vituperated one another? How when each side could back their opinion from the same Bible?—when it seemed as though whichever side was right, God was made in some sort a liar. It was an awful—a fearful thought, and Tom's brain fairly reeled under the shock he had received. For he was a merciless reasoner in his own limited field, and when once this problem had suggested itself, he could do nothing but think of it by day and night, until he fell into a melancholy so profound that it was almost harder to bear than the old overwhelming conviction of sin under which he had laboured long ago.

And now he had no one to whom to go. He absolutely feared to consult those he would hitherto have sought, lest he should hear more of the wrangling which had already so unhinged him. Even his Bible seemed no comfort to him now, for there was always the terrible fear before him, that its words might not be all true, and how was he to distinguish the true from the false? It was small wonder that he fell into deep depression at this time, and felt life absolutely unendurable—so unendurable that it suddenly occurred to him that the only thing to do was to marry, and see if companionship at home, and family responsibilities and cares, would not help him to forget his troubles and be as other men are.

Anything was better than life in its present aspect: when the thought presented itself, Tom felt a thrill of unwonted pleasure, and marvelled

that this solution of the difficulty had not presented itself before. He worked with unwonted satisfaction at his forge all day, and in the evening, leaving the Bible, which had already two days' accumulation of dust upon its cover, untouched upon the table, he smartened himself up as he had not done for long, stuck a flower in his button-hole, and sallied forth across the golden harvest fields to Sheepwold Farm, to see how Meg Dawson would receive him after his long absence. He had once or twice caught sight of her in the village since his return, but he had not attempted to address her. He had given up for the time all thoughts of yoking himself unequally with an unbeliever—as he had chosen to call poor Meg in his thoughts—but now he called to mind the farmer's leaning towards the preachings, and Meg's story of her sister Nanny's conversion. It might be that she herself was converted now, and in any case he felt strong enough to convert his own wife when once he had her in his hands.

Meg looked up with an air of great astonishment, as Tom walked into the kitchen. He was such a stranger that the Dawsons had long ago given up all thoughts of seeing him there any more. Meg was woman enough to feel rather affronted at his sudden and entire desertion of her, although his attentions had at the best of times been spasmodic in character. So now she tossed her head and made as if she hardly knew him: but Tom was too much preoccupied to notice her coolness, and like the great blundering fellow he was, plunged straight into the middle of his errand without taking any trouble to conciliate the girl first.

"Meg," he said, "I've come to have a bit of a talk with thee. Thee knows as I was thinking of making thee my wife a matter of a year ago now: and then something happened as made me think I was best alone in the world, and I've had other things to think of than marrying and giving in marriage. I tried to think it was better, as St. Paul advises, to stay as we were, but it is not of commandment he says it, and we are free to marry if we choose. It may be weak of me, but I can't get on alone. I want somebody to be with me—to make home a bit homelike. And so, Meg, I've come to thee. I used to think as we should suit each other, and I thought thee had the same feeling. What does thee say now? Will thee marry me next month?"

"Well, I never!" cried Meg, her breath fairly taken away by the suddenness of this proposition, and then she suddenly flushed crimson, and her eyes looked anything but full of affection as she turned upon Tom rather fiercely: "Thee be a nice fellow for a husband, Tom, that thee be! Thee pretends thee cares for a girl a little bit, and tries to make her care for thee, and then thee goes away for a year and never so much as comes near her. When the fancy takes thee, back thee comes and wants to wed next week—What does thee think women are made of, Tom—if they will come and go at thy beck and call like that?"

Tom opened his eyes in stupid, masculine surprise, and said nothing.

"Bah!" cried Meg, who had all this time been studying Tom's face pretty closely, finding it even more changed than she had expected. "Thee has turned Methody since I saw thee last, Tom, and I hate the Methodies. Yes," she cried, stamping her foot in a sudden access of fury, "I hate them—and I wouldn't marry thee now, not if thee was Squire of Rookwood. Nanny turned Methody, and she's never been the same since—she's not a bit like a sister to me when I see her. She does naught but worry me about my soul, and bid me flee from the wrath to come. What business of hers is my soul? And I don't think much of her Methody ways—I think they make her a horrid hypocrite. I don't think thee is a hypocrite, Tom, but folks do say as the way thee goes on is dreadful. I'd sooner be in my grave than thy wife. Thee'd better go courting among the Methodies, if thee wants a wife. I'd sooner marry Mike Portway, who's asked me three times already, only father don't think he has enough to keep me comfortable."

And Meg tossed her head defiantly, glad to flaunt in Tom's face this new lover, and show him that other men had not been so blind or so tardy as he.

But Tom had only room in his head for one idea at a time.

"Then it comes to this, Meg—thee'll not marry a Methody?"

"Nay, that I won't," cried the girl, "I've seen enough of them and their ways. I can't abear the way they sets themselves up for saints. I liked thee better, Tom, before thee turned saint: and as for what they teach, father, who was a bit bitten by it once, says as he hears as good gospel from Mr. Latham in the church here as he does at Hownston from the Methodies. It isn't quite so rousing, but if he takes the trouble to listen, it's every bit as good. And I'm not going to be different from other folks to please nobody; so you may just go and choose a wife somewhere else. I'll have none of you."

Tom rose to his feet to go. He was not one to play the ardent lover in face of such a dismissal; as he turned he saw that Janet Dawson was standing behind him, her face stern and severe.

"The lassie has spoken well, Tom Heron," she said, "thou art a vessel of wrath foreordained to perdition. Have I not always said it? I would not give my daughter to thee were it ever so. Hast thou not been a child of hell from thy youth?"

Tom made no attempt to reply, but turned and walked rapidly away. He was utterly rejected for the very reason that he had turned from the paths of wickedness and become a changed character. Truly he was reaping a strange harvest from the seed sown in his heart.

A few days later Madam herself sent for him to Rookwood. Tom was greatly surprised at the summons, but when he reached the house he found that it was on account of a favourite lap-dog that he had been sent for. Madam wished for his skill on behalf of the dog, whose leg had been broken by a kick from a horse.

The little creature was in Madam's boudoir,

and his mistress was with him. It was the first time that Tom had ever penetrated into the dwelling-rooms of the house, and he felt very sheepish and strange as his feet pressed the velvet carpet, and he found himself in an atmosphere of warm perfume and undreamed-of luxury. He was, however, bidden to come forward, and his skill and tenderness over the shivering little invalid did much to win Madam's favourable notice. So, as he was bandaging up the injured limb, after it had been carefully set, she began to speak to him about himself.

"I hear, Tom, that you have turned over a new leaf, and have steadied down and become quite respectable," she said, graciously, "and I am very glad to hear it. But I should like to see you at church on Sundays. I quite thought you would begin to attend since you left off your wild ways."

In the presence of the elegant and softly-spoken woman—for nobody could be more gracious than Madam when she chose—Tom felt strangely tongue-tied and embarrassed. Instead of answering boldly, he muttered something about never having gone much to church, whereat Madam smiled and said:

"No, in past days we hardly looked for it: but you have turned over a new leaf now. And with so much evil going about in these days—dangerous persons calling themselves Methodists leading the ignorant and unwary from the beaten paths of truth—it is of the greater importance that—"

Tom had just finished binding the dog's leg, and he suddenly stood upright, flushing to the roots of his hair.

"Madam," he said huskily, "I am a Methodist myself. It was the Methodists who saved me, body and soul. I do not go to church because I go to their meeting at Hownston. I thought you knew."

Madam looked at him with a sharply-contracted brow.

"A Methodist!" she exclaimed, "you are mocking me, Tom Heron!"

"Madam, I should be mocking my God if I spoke not the truth. I have been a Methodist for nigh upon a year."

"A Methodist!—and living upon the estate. How dared you so deceive us? Did you not know we gave out that no Methodists should be tenants of ours?"

"I heard something like it," answered Tom. "I looked to have notice to quit, but as it came not, I thought—"

"It shall come, and that promptly, unless you will amend your ways," said Madam haughtily. "Tom Heron, I speak for your own good; forget this idle and profane trifling, and stay in your old home. We will not disturb you, if you will give up this new folly."

"Give up my God to please man, Madam: who is profane now?" quoth hot-headed Tom. Madam's hand was upon the bell, and she rang it sharply. To be defied and insulted in her own house by a common blacksmith was just a little too much! Tom was driven forth ere he could say another word. Before the day had passed

the bailiff had come down to his house to give him notice to quit within the week.

So this was the end of it all, thought Tom, as he sat with his head buried in his hands by his fireless grate that night. He had given up all—friends, pleasures, pastimes, love of kindred, the things that make life sweet to the young: all, all, he had renounced, and what had he gained? The scorn of all his former associates, the hatred of the whole village. He had been cast off for his religion by the woman he hoped to wed, and now he was thrust forth from the home where he had lived from childhood for the same cause. And what had he left? His teachers? they were tearing each other to pieces in argument; they had no thought to spare for him. His Bible? how was he to know how to read it aright, when its teachings set men at open war one with another? His prayers and meditations? Tom shuddered as he realised how cold, how lifeless, how formal these had grown. What had he left to cling to? At that moment he felt as though he had nothing—as though he stood alone in a black world, deserted by friend and foes alike, an outcast from the face of the earth, whilst the heavens were as brass above him, and God—if indeed there were a God—had turned His face away.

How long he sat there in loneliness and despair he knew not, but the touch of a hand upon his shoulder caused him suddenly to look up, and by

the dull light of the taper he saw the friendly face of Michael Portway bending over him.

"Tom, old fellow, cheer up," cried Mike, who was in secret a great admirer of Tom's, "thy mother has just heard what has happened, and she bid me come to thee, and bid thee to supper with her. Do'ee come, lad, 'twill do thee good: and a man's mother is his mother, and it hurts her feelings that thee should turn agin her as thee has done. Thee don't eat enough to keep body and soul together; thee's as spare and lean as can be. Thee'll be ill one of these days, if thee doesn't change thy ways a bit. Come, Tom, do."

Almost to the surprise, but greatly to the relief of Michael, Tom rose quickly to his feet, and grasped the hand of his comrade hard in his, saying with something of a gasp:

"Ay, I'll go with thee, I'll go with thee, lad. Don't leave me. I can stand it no longer. Fetch all the other boys; we'll have a night of it together. I've tried the other way, and it's no go. Let me be happy whilst I can!"

Tom's wild laugh startled Michael, but the smith hurried him along the road at breathless speed. That night all Sax was electrified by the news that Tom Heron the Methodist had gone on the drink again, and before a week had passed by the whole place rang with the story of a wilder outbreak than had been known before even in his wildest and most unregenerate days.

BOGATZKY'S GOLDEN TREASURY.

A REPRINT OF MR. JOHN THORNTON'S EDITION OF 1775, WITH JOHN BERRIDGE'S NOTES.

BOGATZKY'S "Golden Treasury" has long been one of the most popular books in Christian Literature. In the Leipzig "Encyclopædia of German Biography," it is said that "without doubt it has had an incomparably larger circulation than any German classic." Published first at Breslau in 1718, it was enlarged in 1722, and in 1734 sixty-six meditations were added, bringing the whole number up to 365, so that it might be used as "a daily companion for the children of God," which was made the second title of the book. Since that time there has been a succession of editions, nearly sixty in all; the fifty-sixth edition, issued in 1880, bearing the title "Karl Heinrich von Bogatzky's Golden Treasury for the children of God, whose treasure is in heaven; consisting of select texts of Scripture, with edifying observations and rhymes attached."

Of the Life of Bogatzky, and the history of his book, a most interesting account has been written by the late Rev. John Kelly, of the Religious Tract Society, a summary of which is prefixed to an edition of the Treasury published

by that Society. This is considerably "altered from the original," as almost all English editions have been, new texts and meditations being substituted, and portions of English hymns replacing those which were selected or written by Bogatzky himself.

Some modification of the original work was quite necessary in a devotional manual intended for English evangelical Christians. Although Bogatzky was orthodox in the essentials of the faith, and a genuine follower of Luther in the article of justification by faith, that *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesie*, yet in other points his treatise was more suited for German than English readers. This was strongly felt by the great and good John Thornton, of Clapham, the friend of Cowper and Newton, of Henry Venn and John Berridge, and the best men of his time. He resolved to prepare, at his own cost, an edition with meditations selected or written in place of some which he did not wholly approve. He took as the basis of his edition a translation first published anonymously in 1753, and reprinted in 1762 and 1774. He applied to his own special

friends, especially to John Berridge, Rector of Everton, and the Rev. William Bull, of Newport Pagnell, in whose life, by his grandson, we find this statement: "From a marked copy I find that four original papers were written by my grandfather, and some others amended by him. Mr. Thornton himself is author of seven."

Many of Mr. Berridge's notes are amusing as well as sensible and instructive. He little expected that they would ever see the light, being intended for the eye of Mr. Thornton as editor. He would probably have been more cautious in his remarks about Antinomians and Arminians, and other controversial topics. But he is himself almost always sound in his theology and judicious in his criticisms. He is also very plain and pointed in his notes. For instance, "This verse is lame, it wants a foot;" "I can make no sense of these two words: 'The care of God far and infinitely exceeds a mother'—far and infinitely when coupled are like one and a million more." Against a meditation by good John Newton, beginning "A feast imports plenty, harmony, and joy," J. B. writes "Is not an English word (bespeaks) better than a Latin one (imports)? Few authors know how to write in English. Indeed it requires more care and pains than most people are aware of. The Bible and Bailey's dictionary are my chief books, one to teach me gospel and the other to teach me English."

Over the verses appended to each meditation Mr. Berridge kept a watchful eye, as when he corrects the couplet,

"My name is printed on His breast,
His Book of Life contains my name."

on which he remarks, "Can a sixth part of your serious readers say or sing these words with true confidence? And does it not tend to beguile carnal readers into vain confidence? I wonder that authors should publish peculiar things for common use."

The remark about singing words not suited to common experience applies to many hymns sung in a congregation of mixed worshippers. But John Berridge is somewhat too general in the condemnation of hymn-writers when he says: "Notwithstanding the various Houses of Confinement, we still want one in this Kingdom, a poetical madhouse, for the cure of rhyming lunatics."

Although unsparing in his criticisms on others (as he writes against many meditations "a dry chip," or, "unintelligible to me"), Mr. Berridge only contributed two of his own, which the reader may be pleased to see. The first is on Psalm xxiii.: "The Lord is my Shepherd"; "Reader, is the Lord Jesus thy Shepherd? has He called thee out of the wilderness, called thy heart from the love of sin and the world, and brought thee into His fold and pastures; brought thee unto a close attendance on His ordinances; and does He feed and refresh thy soul with His word; canst thou distinguish the Shepherd's voice from the voice of a hireling; and does thy heart cleave to the Shepherd in faith and love, adoring His person and approving His laws, as well as admiring His doctrines? Then, fear not,

the Lord is with thee: Jesus is thy Shepherd. Thou shalt want nothing that is really good. Follow thy Shepherd, till He bring thee to glory."

This is Berridge's meditation for February 19. The other contribution is for November 18, on the words "Follow Me," Luke v. 27; and 2 Tim. ii. 3. He prefaces it thus; "This paper (of Bogatzky) does not suit me at all, I have therefore made another. *Utrum mavis accipe.*"

"Would you follow Christ? Then follow Him in self-denial, in humility, in patience, and in a readiness for every good work. Follow Him with a daily cross upon your back, and look to His Cross to make your burden light. Follow Him as your Guide and Guard; and learn to see with His eyes, and to trust in His arm for defence. Follow Him as the Friend of Sinners, who healeth the broken in heart, and giveth rest to weary souls, and casteth out none that come unto Him. Follow Him with faith, resting your whole acceptance with God, and your title to heaven, on His meritorious blood and righteousness. Lastly, follow Him with much prayer. For though He is full of compassion, He loves to be much entreated, and when He is determined to give a blessing, you must yet wrestle with Him for it. Thus follow Jesus, and He will lead you to glory."

Although writing wholly only two papers of his own (out of 366), the fact is that Berridge has, besides, rewritten scores of papers, either in whole (see June 22; July 17; September 8, 9, 17, 18, 21, 25) or in part (see September 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 22, 23, 24; November 29, 30; December 16, 17).

In a letter to the Rev. William Bull, Mr. Thornton says, "Send me a pearl for the Golden Treasury, for January 31st, on Matt. xiii. 5, 6;" and again he writes, "I get slowly on, as you did not mark the pages you remarked on." In another letter, asking for a paper for February 16th, Thornton says, "Berridge I will as little spare as Watts, when I think him not more edifying." So that Mr. Thornton used his own judgment, and kept the work in his own hands and under his own eye.

The reprint of this edition of Mr. John Thornton, with Mr. John Berridge's very racy comments and emendations, has been lately published,¹ under the editorship of the Rev. Charles P. Phinn, B.A., of Balliol College. It is printed from a copy bequeathed to the late Rev. Charles Bridges (of the 119th Psalm), by the Rev. Robert Leslie Melville, Vicar of Much Tey, Essex, the grandson of John Thornton, whose only daughter was married to the seventh Earl of Leven and Melville. Besides the value of the work in itself, it is a literary curiosity. To Mr. Phinn the copy now reprinted was given by Mrs. C. Bridges, after her husband's death, as "a memorial of a long and endeared friendship." Mr. Kelly, the accomplished editor of the Religious Tract Society's edition, appears to have known nothing

¹ "Bogatzky's Golden Treasury, a reprint of Mr. John Thornton's edition of 1775, with Notes by the Rev. John Berridge. Edited by C. P. Phinn, of Balliol College, Oxford, with introduction by Principal Moule, of Ridley Hall, Cambridge."—Elliot Stock.

of John Thornton's work, nor of the help given by his friends, as here recorded. John Thornton died in 1790. Mr. Bentley, who as rector of Camberwell much assisted Mr. Thornton for many years, died in 1795.

The analysis of the contents by Mr. Phinn is extremely interesting; and he gives the names, as far as can now be known, of the various authors of the *Meditations*. The Introduction to the volume, by the Rev. H. C. G. Moule, Principal of Ridley Hall, contains valuable notices of the lives of John Berridge and Charles Bridges, as well as of John Thornton. Who can forget

Cowper's noble tribute of praise to the great philanthropist, the source of whose beneficence this work reveals?—

Some men make gain a fountain, whence proceeds
A stream of liberal and heroic deeds;
The swell of pity, not to be confined
Within the scanty limits of the mind,
Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands,
A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:
These have an ear for His paternal call,
Who makes some rich for the supply of all:
God's gifts with pleasure in His praise employ;
And THORNTON is familiar with the joy.

WANDERINGS IN THE HOLY LAND.

BY ADELIA GATES.

VIII.

THERE are few customs more persistent than those which are practised at weddings and marriage feasts. The learned assure us that some of our own apparently senseless practices at such times are survivals from the days of marriage by capture. The throwing of an old shoe after the happy couple, for instance, means nothing nowadays, but it is the rudimentary survival from the time when the enraged family of the captured bride did all they could to rescue her, throwing sticks, or stones, or old shoes, anything, in short, that was handy, at the head of the ravisher. We have advanced beyond those times, but the old shoe remains to keep us in mind of the good old days when marriage by capture prevailed.

A friend took me to an Arab wedding in Jerusalem, and there I was reminded of how slowly customs change in the East. There are constant references in the Bible to the marriage rites of the land. How the bride decketh herself and goeth out to meet the bridegroom. Then again in the parable of the foolish virgins, how accurately all is described in a few words! The virgins waiting for the bridegroom and getting tired, fell asleep. Suddenly, at midnight, there was a cry made: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him." Even to this day the same cry is raised. When the new-made husband goes forth to meet his bride, the women all cry aloud: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!"

The marriage contract among the Arabs is extremely simple. The contracting parties draw up certain rules for each other's future conduct. The bride declares what her husband may or may not do. If she happens to dislike smoking, she mentions the fact. The husband, on his side, makes his stipulations, which are generally stringent, and to a European often ridiculous. The conditions, being written down, are signed in the presence of the *caid* or other authorized

person. That is a marriage. The same paper torn up in the presence of the *caid* is the divorce. It is very simple.

The little Arab bride, whose wedding I attended in Jerusalem, was very young, very fair, very shy, and very childlike. She was hardly more than twelve years old. I could feel only pity for her. She had missed altogether the long, pleasant childhood that is so sweet a memory to us of northern climes. Oriental women always seem to me like annual flowers, they blossom and fade so early. A season's glory and they are passed, as the French so expressively have it. In Luxor, on the Nile, I stayed with a little mother not fifteen years old, whose baby was able to run about.

The little child-bride at Jerusalem, however young she might be, had been taught the needful etiquette of the occasion—she must not look at the bridegroom. In some places it is speech that is denied to the young pair, or at least to the wife, who must not utter a word during all the days of the festivities, no matter how much her husband may importune her. This is wooing with a vengeance. The bride was dressed in a rich silk dress made in European style. It looked awkward and clumsy, as our dresses always look, beside the graceful, flowing garments of the Orientals. But she was very proud of the ugly, ungainly thing, and expected us to admire it very much, which we could not conscientiously do. Many of the guests were English, all were women. There was no man present at the wedding-breakfast except the fine-looking and agreeable bridegroom. He spent the whole time looking at his bride with all his heart in his glowing, dark eyes, while the rest of us talked and laughed together very merrily as we discussed the Arab sweetmeats. There was an endless variety of them, for Arabs

are very fond of sweetmeats and skilful in the making thereof.

The Mohammedans believe in destiny. What is to be, will be, and there is no fighting against fate. This belief makes them admirable soldiers and calm in defeat. It is useless to rail against the immutable decrees of Fate. All the true believer has to do, is to bow his head and say—"it is written." There is a Mussulman tradition that the Jews will once again acquire the

ferent. Jews can dwell once again in Jerusalem. A friend told me that some time ago some strange Jews came there out of Arabia. No one knew anything of them, no one had ever heard of them before, no one knew there were any Jews in Arabia. But there they were, most unmistakable Jews, with all the signs, those unmistakable signs of their race upon them. They said they were of the tribe of Dan, and had kept themselves uncontaminated from mixture of other blood, and

other faith, during all these long ages, and now were come to see Jerusalem. On being asked what had happened to make them undertake this journey:

"Nothing has happened," they replied, "but a spirit came upon us, and we wished to learn how it was at Jerusalem. Therefore we came."

Assuredly there never was a people like the Jews, and never a nation's history like their history.

The country about Jerusalem is barren and desolate looking, and this although the soil itself is fertile. People generally ascribe the want of tillage to the bad rule of the Turks. These relentless masters grind down the tiller of the soil with burdensome taxes. If he raises any more than is just enough to keep him and his family from absolute want, it will only be taken from him by the Turkish tax-gatherer. Therefore he only half tills the soil, hence the desolation of the land. To make people thoroughly thriftless there is nothing like insecurity of property. Still, after allowing a due share of evil to the rule of the Turk—and it is moreover a large share—I cannot think that the entire blame of this unproductiveness is to be laid at their door. It is probable that it is, in main, due to the destruction of the forests and the consequent lessening of the rainfall and drying up of springs and water-courses. Wherever the first has happened, the second has followed as an inevitable consequence, here

as elsewhere. Greece is a noteworthy example of droughts ensuing upon the cutting down of trees. In all countries long inhabited by a pastoral people, and especially where it is nomadic, as a pastoral people is likely to be, the result, however slow, is always the same. They want immediate pasturage for their flocks rather than forests to produce future showers, and so gradually these disappear and Nature, through her inexorable laws, revenges herself upon the ignorant devastators: witness Mesopotamia, Arabia, and some parts of Northern Africa.

Some of the valleys of the Sabara, notably those of the Souf, the Igharghar, and the Miya,



"THE LITTLE CHILD-BRIDE."

control of Palestine, although ultimately it will fall again into the hands of the followers of the prophet. Perhaps it is this tradition and their belief in destiny which have occasioned the relaxation in the laws against the Jews, which until recently were such as to prevent any Jew from living in Jerusalem. They might come there for a short time, and remain a certain number of months, at the end of which time they had to depart. The sick ones dying, Jews sometimes did so arrange that their leave of residence did extend over their death, in which case they obtained the dearly-prized boon of being buried in the land of their fathers. But now it is dif-

were once watered, wooded, and cultivated. Now they are a sandy waste, without inhabitants; and man, not God, has created this desolation. Doubtless the pastoral tribes who inhabited Palestine were themselves largely to blame for its decline in fertility. The utter absence of wood in all this region, a fact which the Crusaders commented upon when they came, is by some attributed to the Roman Conquest. With the absence of trees there was very naturally "drought and a barren land."

I remember once when going across the tree-

"Camels," he answered briefly.

"Camels," echoed I in surprise, "how do camels make a desert?"

"Camels and Arabs, madame, will make a desert of any place, and so will goats," said my friendly fellow-traveller.

I reflected that I had heard it said, that the goats of St. Helena had completely destroyed the ebony forests of that island. I told him so.

"Exactly," he replied, "let browsing animals loose anywhere and you will soon clear off the trees. And if to camels, which are bad enough,



PATH LEADING TO THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

less, herbless and waterless region south of Batna, in eastern Algeria, I spoke with a fellow-traveller about the country. He was a native of the place.

"Could irrigation make these wastes productive?" I asked incredulously.

"Madame," he replied emphatically, "water can do everything."

And I, remembering the oases in the desert, was fain to agree with him.

"This was not always the dreary waste it is now," he said.

"Indeed," I answered, "and what made it a dreary waste?"

you add Arabs, there is nothing but desolation before you. The camel eats everything, grass, bushes, trees; the Arab plants nothing, cares for nothing; between them they have turned this very country here into the waste that you see. Before this became a caravan route, it was not a desert."

So spoke my friendly fellow-traveller in Algeria. Perhaps he is right. Undoubtedly Arabs and camels flourish in the desert. Hitherto I had looked upon them as the picturesque, and fitting accessories of a desert. Shall I now consider them its all-destroying creators? It was one of my day-dreams, as I rode in silent

musings over these stony roads, that capital in strong hands shall yet do its beneficent work in Palestine. Midas, Argus, and Briareus: capital, intelligence and labour. What might not this great trio of powers accomplish?

Dreams, are these? Steam was a dream; electricity was a dream; all the greatest things were dreams in their beginning. But it turned out that the dreamers were the seers. Perhaps my dream may prove to be a gleam of clairvoyance.

This is a land of dreams, but they are dreams of the past, not the future. The mind can hardly keep awake to the fact that this is the nineteenth century; it is constantly falling asleep to this day's idea, and is ever dwelling upon the deeds of the past.

The Mount of Olives! The Garden of Gethsemane! What names are these! What images do they not rouse, even in the dullest mind? It almost seems as if I should not go to that Garden, as if my feet should not tread the earth, where He had knelt and prayed: "O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." Yet why should not I go as well as others? I, at least, would go in reverent spirit; I, at least, would go as one devoutly to a sacred spot; I would go, therefore, alone. The Garden is surrounded by a wall, in order to guard its trees from—goats?—No. From camels?—No. From Christian pilgrims! Can you not carry away relics in your hearts, you destroying believers? Must your faith be vivified by a stick or a stone? Can you not believe unless you can touch relics? You are a generation of Vandals; you respect nothing; you feel for nothing. Verily I believe you would not hesitate to chip off bits from the Gates of Pearl, and dig out the jasper and chrysolite that garnish the foundations of the New Jerusalem. I speak as one having knowledge. Have I not even seen one of you try, with her umbrella, to extract a bit of the mosaic from one of the great pictures of the Evangelists that adorn the dome of St. Peter's?

Seven of the olive trees of Gethsemane are believed by many to be older than the Christian era. Olives do sometimes reach the age of two thousand years. Those that I mentioned having seen at Girgenti are known to be

nineteen hundred years old. Did these gnarled and knotted trees witness "the Agony and bloody Sweat" of that dread night in Gethsemane? One wishes to believe it; yet how can we, in the face of what Josephus says? Titus cut down all the trees around Jerusalem for a distance of one hundred furlongs from the walls. There would not, therefore, have been any trees left standing in the Garden of Gethsemane. Some one tells me however that when olives are cut down, young ones spring from the base. Perhaps these may have so sprung from the roots of trees that stood here in the days when Jesus lived. But what matters it? Shall I be like the relic-hunters, and not believe unless I see a stick or a stone to mark the spot? I climbed the steep path which led to the summit of the Mount of Olives. I stood on the spot where Jesus had stood: "When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it."

Yes, this is the spot. Here He stood. There lies the city. How beautiful it looks! We see none of its squalor, none of its dirt, nothing but the tall minarets and the glistening domes, the shining houses, the walls, the towers.

Mentally I "walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces."

Reft of her sons, of all her hopes, forlorn Jerusalem is still, when seen from here, "the perfection of beauty."

Here Jesus stood and gazed upon a Jerusalem far more glorious than the Jerusalem upon which my eyes rest. He gazed, and seeing the doom which was to overtake it cried out in His grief, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" and I, standing here and remembering the fearful fulfilment of that doom, can but echo in my heart the grief-stricken cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!"

From the tower of the monastery there is a wonderful view to be had on all sides. The Dead Sea, the Blue Sea it should be called, lay in the distance, but so clear was the air, it looked almost close at hand. It lies really four thousand feet below where I stood, but it appears to be not a tenth of that depth down. It seemed as if I could walk thither in a few minutes, and yet it was seven hours distant, seven hours of hard riding over barren and desolate hills.

THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF ST. PAUL.

III.—A GREAT RENUNCIATION: MADE AND RATIFIED.

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss."—*Phil.* iii. 7, 8.

THE dawn of life to Saul of Tarsus was bright with promise; brighter far than it rises to the majority of men. If others had ground of confidence and right of boasting, he had more. He was no proselyte, flotsam from the wreckage of the pagan world, but born within the covenant and "circumcised the eighth

day." He could boast of unmixed descent and untainted blood "of the stock of Israel;" no apostate tribe, but faithful "Benjamin their ruler" reckoned him among its sons; no foreign speech had ousted from his lips the tongue in which psalmists had sung and prophets foretold: he was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

In his reverence for the Mosaic economy he had attached himself to "the most straitest sect" of the Jews' religion: not allying himself with the worldly time-serving Herodians, nor casting in his lot with the cold, sceptical, lax Sadducees, he had striven to render obedience where obedience was hardest, and to keep the law where its precepts were most numerous and exacting; he was "as touching the law, a Pharisee." Against such as he judged to be foes of the religion of his birth, he shrank not from waging a bold and bitter warfare; of Judaism he gladly became a champion, in his "zeal persecuting the church." Nor did he conceal beneath a fanatic's zeal a treacherous and sinful heart. He did not seek to bend others to a yoke which he refused; he did not proclaim a sanctity after which he failed to aspire; he was "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Of all these privileges Saul was thoroughly aware. He had appraised and added up the worth of what he distinctly calls his "gains" (Margin, Rev. Vers.). He had of old taken stock of life and of its privileges; and the credit standing to his account seemed enormous, and without any deductions. Every separate item of gain he had noted down and rejoiced over. The correct administration of the seal of circumcision, his true Israelitic descent, his tribal prerogative as a Benjamite, his uncorrupt Hebrew ancestry, his Pharisaic adherence to law, his persecuting championship of Mosaism, the unimpeachableness of his legal righteousness—he knew them all. Surely these were gains to him. The men of his race and age would envy him who had been born to such wealth and privilege, and who had added thereto. Nor was the path to greater wealth shut; it was opened, and Saul was speeding along it, making havoc of the Church of Christ. And he ventured to think that even before God these things would be availing, and this wealth of prerogative and zeal would count. In his own eyes he had accumulated vast "gains."

Yet there came a day when he was required to make a complete renunciation of these prized possessions. A "heavenly vision," which he dared not disobey, called him away from this seeming wealth. Jesus Christ, whom he had persecuted, claimed him as His captive and bond-servant. All that he had reckoned gain he must renounce, and no longer esteem. Israelite descent, Pharisaic zeal, legal righteousness—these things were not gold, but dross. He must become the companion and Apostle of the Gentiles, and preach the faith he "once destroyed." He must accept a righteousness which was not his own, and came not from his own work, but which was derived from Christ and received through faith. All that he had counted most precious, all his "gains," he must henceforth reckon loss. And while the apparent gains had been many, of birth, as a Jew, of choice, as a Pharisee, of labour as a persecutor and zealot, the result was one huge loss. Turn whither he would, loss met his gaze. Nor had he merely awoke to the fact that what he once valued was of no worth, he found it positive harm. It was not merely that, like counterfeit jewels, whose falseness is

discovered, he might retain these things and be no richer by retaining, and no poorer by losing; the very treasures he once rejoiced in he must now renounce and cast off as harmful, and will be glad to be rid of them. If he could not change his race or alter the fact of his Hebrew descent, yet he will no longer rely upon it, or manifest a trace of Jewish pride and fancied superiority. But his Pharisaic strictness, his zeal in persecution, his legal righteousness, which had stood between Christ and him, these he utterly and for ever rejected, as the sources of his loss, the occasions of his bitter sorrow. For on the day when Christ spoke to him as he neared Damascus, he made of all these things a complete and final renunciation. "These I counted loss for Christ."

Now, when the apostle writes this Epistle, more than twenty-five years have run their course. He has had ample opportunity to review his life, to test his choice, to reckon up again the balance of life he once struck. He has seen life under many aspects; amid the rude tribes of the Galatian and Phrygian highlands, in philosophic Athens, in wealthy and luxurious Corinth, in Oriental and superstitious Ephesus, and now at last in Imperial Rome, mistress of the world. He has learnt that over against the gains which life once possessed, he must now place the hatred of his countrymen, the persecutions of the heathen, the perils of travel, the pangs of hunger, and cold, and nakedness, the exhaustion of manual labour; but with them "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord." Yet now, when he may well have tested every item in the account of life, and revalued each, when, though prematurely aged and spent, he might well have desired the fulfilment of the dream of early life, and lamented that he was turned aside from the career at first marked out, he, on the contrary, reiterates his choice—I again renounce, to-day as of old, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss." So under the palace of the Cæsars, and within what seemed the shadow of death, the apostle ratified the great renunciation he had made—

These things I counted loss for Christ.
Yea, I count all things but loss.

It is by the same narrow gate of renunciation that men to-day enter the kingdom of heaven. Things that were gains they learn to reckon loss. All things of this life pale before "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." For His sake, at His call, we leave the things dearest to us: wealth, hope, pleasure, friends, life's scheme and purpose—and all else. We must forsake our own righteousness, even if, like the apostle's, it were void of blemish. We must know what it is to come to Christ poor and bereft, with all our own good renounced, and our own will submerged, in order that we may obtain His righteousness and submit to His will. Happy is the man who has said, "What things were 'gains' to me—all in which fortune favoured me, all that by skill and energy I acquired—these I counted loss." Happy is the man who has learnt the value of life's best gifts

in comparison with "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." But happier is he who can ratify and confirm the great surrender; who, having for Christ's sake surrendered all and reckoned all loss, can pass through the discipline of life, through all that Christ's service may have involved, and yet in the end can say with St. Paul, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss." How many have failed after the renunciation? In how many eyes have the "gains," which once were counted loss regained their value until the great renunciation has been itself renounced? Well is it for us, if after a life wide in experience, and fruitful in toil and sorrow,

we can repeat what once we said and stand true to the choice we made. Well is it if day by day in view alike of the seductions and promises which life holds out, and of the toils and disappointments which it brings, we can approve our reckoning and ratify our decision—"I counted loss, I count all things but loss."

High heaven that heard the solemn vow
That vow renewed shall daily hear;
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.

J. T. L. MAGGS, B.A.

ANTHONY'S MESSAGE.

BY RUTH LAMB.

"I HAVE kept shop in Storfod for thirty years, and before that, I helped my mother when father died and she was left a widow; not marrying until she had saved enough to keep her and went to live with sister Sarah. And I've gone on the safe system, finding that it pays best, even if you have less custom. I keep to ready money lines, I do. Once begin trusting, and you begin losing. The new man may do as he likes. I think I can say he will be welcome to all the customers he gets away from me."

Anthony Clarkson kept the old-established village shop at Storfod—a shop that had been found sufficient for the village needs, during forty-five years past. It was a wonderful place in its way, for every inch of room was occupied; and though only a small shop, it was made to hold a large stock of goods.

"I call it my Noah's Ark," Anthony would say, "because it holds some of every sort of goods, and most of what is best. I don't think the new man will be able to sell better articles than I do, and I am sure he cannot afford to sell cheaper, because folks must pay for credit. Stands to reason that in a shop where it is a ready-money business all round, a man can afford to do better by his customers. If you give credit you are sure to lose something, and to my mind, the payers have to make up the difference."

Anthony puckered up his knowing old face and gave an inward chuckle, which was the nearest approach to a laugh he ever indulged in. But there was something so droll in his looks and tone, that the very sight of his face provoked laughter in other people. He did not seem much afraid of his new rival, in spite of the plate glass windows, polished counters and canisters, and spick-and-span appearance of the shop. The remarks above quoted were drawn forth by the announcement that the new shop-keeper, Mr. Rogers, had said he would open weekly or monthly accounts with respectable and trustworthy customers.

Anthony had found it very hard to keep to the "ready money lines." In a village, people are generally well-acquainted with their neighbour's circumstances, and as he was a truly kind-hearted man, it went against the grain to refuse credit to John Smith's wife when her husband was laid up with a broken leg, or to James Brown when the twins were born.

But Anthony knew that if John Smith's leg, when in a sound condition, had carried him straight home, instead of to the "Blue Bell," where he got more beer than he could carry,

he would not have fallen and met with the accident; and that if pretty Jessie Brown had not spent every penny of her young husband's earnings in buying unsuitable finery besides running into debt with a travelling draper unknown to James, she would have had a fund laid by to meet the extra expenses of the "rainy day."

"I can't pretend to pay second-hand for John's drink or Jessie's fine clothes," said Anthony. "I am sorry for the poor lass. She'll find out now that the man who will have ready money, but sells a good article, is more of a friend than the other who hawks his things from door to door, persuades you to buy things you don't want, and makes you pay through the nose for what you thought would be such a cheap bargain. I am sorry for Mrs. Smith too, but John is in hospital, and I hope he will learn a lesson whilst his leg bone is knitting again. Her hands will be free, and they are willing ones, and I can afford to give, though I cannot afford to trust."

So Anthony kept to his rule, yet found many ways of helping his poor neighbours and customers without breaking it, and no one in Storfod could say of him that he was a hard man, whilst many declared that old Anthony had been a true friend in times of trouble, though he would not give credit to the value of a penny.

Anthony was fond of his joke, and boasted that he had two reasons for not giving credit, and that these were sufficient to answer every applicant.

If a stranger settled in Storfod and asked for it, he gave one; if an old inhabitant, he quoted the other. The new comer would produce his "shop book" from the tradesman with whom he had run weekly bills, and pointing out how regularly these had been paid, ask for similar accommodation.

Then Anthony gave as his reason, "I cannot go on the credit system with you, because I don't know you; besides, mine is a ready-money business only."

If the neighbour made an appeal, the reason would be, "I cannot give you credit, because I do know you, and I'm sure you know me too well to expect I shall break my rule and do you harm by letting you get into debt that would hang for many a day like a millstone round your neck."

"Because you do know your customer, and because you do not, are reasons enough to meet all cases," persisted Anthony, and there were plenty in Storfod who lived to thank him for keeping to his rule.

"He taught me good habits; he has saved me many a

pound by making me pay; for if the money must go down on the counter, one is careful not to buy unless the thing is really wanted. Pay day seems so far off when trust is easy to get, and inclination says you must have this or that."

"Ready money means 'do without,' and makes it easy."

There were, of course, many differences of opinion amongst the villagers when the new shop was opened. Some remained firm supporters of old Anthony, and dealt with him as usual. Some availed themselves of the chance of obtaining credit at the new shop. Others said, "We pay for what we get, and when we get it, we are not beholden to Anthony Clarkson, so if we see a thing better or cheaper elsewhere, we will give the new man a turn. You may deal too long at one place."

On the whole, however, Anthony and his old customers kept together, and having prospered, he was not the man to wish to have all to himself.

"Storford is a bigger place than it used to be, and there are more folks to feed. I'll not grudge Mr. Rogers a slice off the loaf that has always been more than enough for me and mine. I don't think he's a bad sort, though he goes on different lines from me."

Mr. Rogers was not a bad sort by any means. He was a worthy young man and an earnest Christian. He had come to Storford, not with any idea of setting up an opposition shop to Anthony Clarkson, but because the village had grown of late, and there seemed a likelihood of its supporting two shops in place of one. Men were at work on a branch railway in the neighbourhood, and brought down wives and families, so there would be more mouths to feed and money stirring.

Anthony saw his rival in church, and as he said, "took stock of him." His mental conclusion was favourable, and on the road home, he remarked to his wife—

"I like that young man's looks, and the way he took care of his mother. The roads were slippery with frost this morning, and he drew her arm through his in a tender fashion that went to my heart. Eh, Martha! The sight of them took me back forty years, for his mother is a widow as mine was then."

"And you were a good son to her, Anthony."

"Aye, thank God. It's an ill witness memory bears, when it reproaches an old man for having neglected his mother, when he was young and strong. Do you know, Martha, I think I shall go across to the new shop and have a talk with the master."

Martha offered no objection, and to Mr. Rogers' great surprise, Anthony Clarkson called at his house on the Monday evening, just as he had closed his shop.

The young man said "Good evening," and looked his astonishment, seeming hardly to know what to expect.

"Good evening," said Anthony, holding out his hand, "I've come in a neighbourly way to have a bit of talk with you, if you'll ask me in, but I cannot talk on the doorstep."

"I beg your pardon, I did not quite understand," said Mr. Rogers in a hesitating way, "but I am very glad to see you, sir. Walk in," and he led the way to a neat little room, where his mother was sitting busy with her knitting.

"This is Mr. Clarkson, mother. The gentleman who keeps the old-established shop in Church Street."

"Not much of the gentleman, ma'am," said Anthony. "In fact rather a rough and ready old chap, but I hope you'll not consider me intruding. I come in a neighbourly way, being a bit drawn to your son by a little thing I saw yesterday, coming from church. It took me back forty year and more."

Then in his homely way, he told his hearers how the sight of them—mother and son—had gone to his heart.

"For I was only a youngster myself when I had to stand by a widowed mother, and I waited years before I married

my Martha, so as to make sure first that the old lady's latter days would be made comfortable.

"Well, God has been good to me since then. I have put by what will find bread and cheese for the wife and me while we live, and for our girls, both well married, when we have done with it.

"And now I should not liked to be called Mr. Haveall. I have had my loaf well buttered, along with pretty hard work, you know, and I shall not grudge the sharing it with another man of the right sort. As Storford is growing fast, there was bound to be another shop, and I hope you will look back in due time on such an experience as mine has been."

"You are very kind. I never expected such words from you, Mr. Clarkson," said the younger man. "I was afraid you would look on me in a different spirit—but I was bound to begin somewhere, and Storford seemed a likely place."

"So it is, so it is," was the hearty reply. "Room for both of us, especially as we shall go on different lines, for mine is a ready-money concern, and I am too old to change a plan that has answered so well. I know everybody in Storford, except the new comers, and I can give you a wrinkle or two, if you are to be trusted," and Anthony looked straight at Mrs. Rogers as if for an answer.

The widow's face had a beautiful loving light on it as she turned to Anthony and said—

"Sir, I have trusted my son, and treated him as a friend ever since he was a mere child. He has never broken a promise to me, or betrayed a trust, or told a lie."

"Why he's the very sort of man I took him to be," said Anthony, with a comical expression on his rugged face. "Right again, as usual. Now, Mr. Rogers, I don't expect you can afford to lose money or make many bad debts."

The young man turned pale at the thought, and replied—

"It would be ruin, for the capital is not mine, but my mother's."

"More need for me to help you to add to it. Now ma'am, as you have given your son a good character, I am going to let him into a few secrets that may be of use, that is if he feels like trusting me in return."

Then the shrewd old man took out a paper, on which was a long list of Storford names. He told Mr. Rogers who were thoroughly trustworthy, of others who would, he said, be honest with good looking after, and some who had been amongst the first to buy trifles at the new shop for ready money, who must on no account be allowed to run into debt.

"They have paid a little, to get credit for a great deal afterwards. These others are old customers of my own, and to be trusted, if they should come to you."

"I never knew any one act so kindly as you are doing, Mr. Clarkson," said the astonished young tradesman.

"May be not, but I am reckoned a queer, stubborn, old fellow that will go his own way about things—but, after all, this is not my way. When I first heard you were going to begin business here, I felt very angry, and I said to myself, 'I'll drive that young man out of Storford. I'll undersell him. I'll begin to give credit. I can afford to lose a little to make him lose more. This may not be a paying plan to begin with, but I shall get back my own with interest in the long run'—then God sent me a message that went straight home. He bade me look at you and your mother, and see myself and mine as we were forty years ago. He bade me think of the work and the struggles of those old times, and to note the way by which He had led me and the blessings with which it had been strewn.

"I saw all these things as clear as daylight, and I seemed to hear a voice asking me, 'Were your success and present prosperity given you to enable you to strew your neighbour's path with thorns, perhaps to ruin him? Would you, who have enough and to spare, take the bread from

his lips, which he is working hard to win? Would you rob him of hope and courage, and drive him, with a sinking heart and lessened means, to begin again in yet another new neighbourhood? Anthony Clarkson, you can only render your offering of thanksgiving to God, through your neighbour, for the Lord of heaven and earth needs nothing at your hands.'

"It was this Heaven-sent message that changed my mind, made me ashamed of my first thoughts towards you, and sent me here to offer you a bit of advice, and to say with all my heart, 'May God prosper you!'

"For the time to come, if you feel as I do, we shall be good friends and neighbours, not rivals looking for chances to over-reach one another.

"But, mind you, I am not going to give up business and leave you the field to yourself. I shall stick to my shop and keep all the customers I can, but I believe there are plenty to keep us both going."

"I should be sorry if you did think of giving up," said the young man. "No one else would act as you are doing, I do not know how to thank you."

"Don't want thanks. Thank God for having shown me how an old man whom He has prospered should act towards a young man who is struggling up hill.

"May be you have heard my two reasons for not giving credit in business. I refuse it to one lot, because I do not know them, to the others, because I do. Saw these words in a book and thought they were capital, when one is dealing with human nature."

"But things are the other way about, when one thinks of God in Christ Jesus. The more we know of Him the more we must trust Him, though we have only seen Him by the eye of faith, and through the Holy Spirit's enlightening influence."

Anthony Clarkson's rugged face had a beautiful light on it as he said these words, rising from his seat as he finished them.

Mrs. Rogers had hard work to speak, but she took the rough hand outstretched to her, and with the tears streaming down her cheeks, said—

"May the God of the widow bless you and reward you for your disinterested goodness to my son and me."

"Not so disinterested, ma'am, after all," returned Anthony with a smile. "I shall not suffer by doing what I feel to be right. My Master will take care of that; and think how much happier I shall be than if I had been doing my worst against a good son!"

"If you would not mind my walking a little way with you," said Mr Rogers, when they reached the door; "I have not been out to-day."

"The very thing I should like, come and see my wife."

So the two went to Anthony's house in company; and though it was winter time, there were plenty of Storfors folk who saw them and wondered, what next?

And by Anthony's fireside, young Rogers opened his mind to sympathising listeners in the shape of himself and his good wife, and told of his anxiety lest his mother's little capital should be diminished through her willingness to place it unreservedly in his hands; but when he went away it was with cheery words ringing in his ears, and valuable information for his guidance in business matters, which proved as useful as the kindly giver meant it to be.

Storfors folk were amazed at seeing the rivals, as they deemed them, walking together as friends; and at first thought that Anthony Clarkson must be the real proprietor of the new concern. However, he soon convinced them to the contrary, and stood out sturdily for the old shop and his multifarious wares. In due time he rejoiced in the prosperity which attended his neighbour's efforts, whilst his own was but little affected by Mr. Roger's coming to Storfors

And on Christmas Day, the young man and his mother were the guests of Anthony Clarkson and his good wife; and the four ate their meal together with hearts full of peace and goodwill towards each other, and thankfulness to God.

"We have been used to gather our two girls and their husbands with a child apiece for Christmas time," said Mrs. Clarkson; "but things have so happened that we cannot have them this year; for Sarah has a fortnight old baby, and Martha's little one is just over the measles, and not fit to bring out of doors. We are glad not to be by ourselves, and that you are not by yourselves either."

Mrs. Rogers and her son had almost dreaded Christmas coming, because last year the husband and father had been with them, and now his place on earth would know him no more. So they were glad indeed to join old Anthony and his wife, and to be led by their encouraging words to think of present mercies with thankful hearts, instead of brooding sadly over past sorrows. On his side, Anthony rejoiced that instead of listening to the first promptings of his own heart he had listened to that other voice which said to him, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and had acted upon its teachings.



Things New and Old.

PERFECT SERVICE.—"His servants shall serve Him." (Rev. xxii. 3.)—These are words of deep and precious meaning to the true servant of God. Perhaps there are none who are so ready to cry "we are unprofitable servants" as those who are labouring most earnestly in their blessed Master's work. It is they who are most sensible of their shortcomings; it is they who long for strength, and zeal and ability; it is they who feel most the difficulties of doing any work as it ought to be done, just because they are indeed working. To them the thought of heaven, not as a place of idleness but of work, is welcome. They long indeed for rest, but not for utter inaction; and it is a blessed thought that the service which they love will in that happy land be no longer that of unprofitable servants,—it will be perfect holy, and complete. His servants, the angels that excel in strength, never weary of doing His commandments. Theirs has been from of old a service such as passes man's understanding as much as it transcends his powers. But in the state of blessedness to which Christ by His atoning blood shall at last bring all whom the Father hath given Him, there will be work for all, and there will be strength to do that work whatever it may be. That strength comes with the beatific vision: "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." This was the thought that the Psalmist beheld afar off when he turned from the perplexities of life to the glorious hereafter,—"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness." And in the same spirit the beloved disciple looked forward to the time when Christ's people would be like Himself,—like God's one perfect servant and Son, in whom He is well pleased, for in that day "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.)

Oh, weary workers for Christ, despond not, nor let your faith fail you when you feel how poor your work is, and how feeble is your strength! It is of God's great goodness that He allows you to do anything for Him now, be it ever so little. The time will come when, in a very different manner, you, with all His servants, shall serve Him.—M. A. S. M.

HONEST WILL.

CHAPTER III.



AFTER much deliberation, and much delay, this important business was committed to Bill Thorpe.

The cares and troubles of recent times had wonderfully called out whatever there was in the lad of shrewdness and energy. It was a painful thing for him to part with Crummie, but when he saw it must be done, he braced himself up for the duty. He would take her to the next fair in a town not very far off, and get the best price he could for her. When the time came, his mother gave him all manner of counsels and charges.

"My dearest mother," he said, as he embraced her, "I will remember and follow all your counsels; and hope to bring back a good bag

of silver in exchange for poor Crummie."

In the household of simple faith, the success of Bill on the following day was the subject of earnest prayer that night.

Next morning there was a doleful scene at the cottage. Poor Mary was full of sorrow, and could not be consoled. It was with difficulty she was persuaded to stay beside her mother, while Bill went to bring out Crummie. The beast seemed to know what was going on, and was equally unwilling to leave the old place. When brought out, with rope attached, she made the air ring with her dismal moans, as if aware she was led out never to return. When Bill had again received as many cautions as before, he at last marched boldly on toward the fair. As it was a long journey, they started betimes, and all the way Bill's heart was filled with mingled sorrow and hope. At last he arrived in the market town where the fair was held, and soon was in the midst of the busy noisy crowd of people.

Now I do not intend to say much about the scenes and incidents of that day, nor to tell how Bill had to bear many an insult, and much "chaffing" about the wretched beast, "all skin and bones," one said, which he had brought to sell at the best price he could. He was convinced gradually that Crummie had not the beauty and good favour with which her friends at the cottage credited her, in their partial judgment. His hopes were much lessened, as he saw other healthier young beasts sold, and he still standing, tired and hungry, trying to get a purchaser. Many looked, but passed on with some impudent or contemptuous remark. At length a rough-looking man stopped, and to him Bill made earnest appeal to buy, and told him, not very wisely, of the home troubles and the starvation prospects, which made him anxious to get something for the cow.

"I'll give you a five pound note," said the man, "for it is a miserable-looking beast, not worth that."

"Make it six," said Bill; and again began to plead the poverty and straits at home.

"That's not my affair," said the man, "but I'll give you six pounds."

Bill gave a last tender embrace to his dear Crummie, and, turning to the man, said:

"You'll treat her kindly, won't you? If you feed her well she'll pick up wonderfully."

"Don't fret yourself," said the man, "she'll soon get a blow that will end all her troubles."

"What did you say," asked Bill, frightened by the man's roughness, and now seeing that he was dealing with a butcher, who only wanted Crummie to kill. "You would kill my Crummie," sobbed the lad. "No, we will rather die of hunger than sell our dear cow only to be killed."

The boy took hold of the rope, and the man refused to let go, or to take back the money, which Bill was ready to give.

The noise speedily brought a crowd round the place, and the butcher saw he would not be allowed to move off quietly, as he tried to do. He was a thorough rogue, as his next move showed. Pretending to yield to the lad's entreaties, he took hold of the note and the money handed by him, and after looking at it said that the young rascal had given him a flash note, and that the right one was still in his pocket. This was too much for "Honest Will," who was amazed at the attempt to pay for his cow with a forged note. Loud were his exclamations, and the crowd well knew that the poor lad had no other note in his pocket; but, as it turned out, he had only a few pence.

Just at this moment Farmer Freeman, well-known to all in the neighbourhood, going home in his gig, drew up to see what was the matter. A woman from Will's village was denouncing the rogue of a butcher, and declaring to all the crowd that Will was an honest lad. The butcher also knew Farmer Freeman well, and that he would stand no nonsense, when he learned the true state of affairs. So he very quickly disappeared, leaving honest Will without any money, and the cow unsold!

The kind farmer felt the utmost pity for the lad, who was in a state of confused misery, and, speaking to him quietly, asked his name.

"Will Thorpe," he said.

"What!" said the farmer, "are you the son of Widow Thorpe? She is an honest hard-working woman, and has often done a day's work at my place. I should like to do something for her son. Here, my lad, is a crown piece for you."

"No, sir, I thank you; I am not begging, but I am very much troubled about not selling the cow, in our need."

The woman in the crowd again spoke up, saying Will was an honest lad, and always told the truth. This pleased the farmer more, and he said to Will:

"Jump up, there's room for you in the gig, and hitch your cow at the back, so as to follow us. We'll not go fast, and I'll drive you home."

On the way, Farmer Freeman heard the whole story of the widow's troubles, and in his own mind resolved what to do; not without uttering strong words about Jack the butcher, whom he said he would bring to book for attempting to cheat a poor lad.

The end of it all was that before long the widow and her children found a new home, in a cottage on Farmer Freeman's land. Mrs. Thorpe recovered so far as to be able to work occasionally, both in the stables and the fields; and honest Will found full employment in the garden, with plenty of time for improving himself in learning, under the guidance of his pious mother, and also at the village school. They were happy and they were grateful; grateful to God first, and to good Farmer Freeman, who obtained in the widow's children, in due time, most faithful

and useful servants. So Widow Thorpe's patience, and resignation, and trust in God were rewarded. She ended her days in peace and comfort; and it was well with her and her children. If we could take a peep into the future we should see Mary married happily to a young farmer, while William rose to be steward at the old Hall, where the young Squire now lived. But our story is limited to the time when he first became known as "Honest Will."

Suffer Little Children.

"SUFFER little children,"
Softly Jesus said,
As they came before Him,
By their mothers led;
From the hands that held them
With no shy alarms,
Willingly they nestled
In His loving arms.

"Suffer little children,"
For the way is long,
Sins and snares are many,
And the foe is strong;
I will hold them safely,
Guide them with my hand,
Bring them ere the nightfall
To the children's land.

"Suffer little children,"
Let them come to Me,
Still the word is waited
Over land and sea;
Pity for the helpless,
Strength for those who fall,
In the heart of Jesus
There is love for all.

"Suffer little children,"
Lord, to Thee we come,
In Thy heavenly kingdom
We would be at home;
Keep us by Thy mercy,
Till we too shall stand,
And receive Thy blessing
In the children's land.

MARY ROWLES JARVIS.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMAS.

NO. XI.

1. What St. Paul says "puffeth up."
2. Another name, according to an apostle, for covetousness.
3. A sect in the early church whose "doctrine" Jesus "hated."
4. One of the gifts presented by the wise men to the infant Jesus.

The initials of each word in order place
And a great office of Christ you trace.

W. O.

NO. XII.

1. A word for trials manifold
To faithful few by Christ foretold.
2. Where fell an idol from its shrine
Twice down before the ark divine?
3. Of whom did David make request
To give his aged parents rest?

4. What fearful means was used to break
Good prisoners bonds, and souls awake?
5. What waters as strong walls were made
Till Israel's foes their depths invade?
6. Whence brought they for a king of old
Bright glistening gems and precious gold?
7. What simple tiny token brought
By gentle bird soothed anxious thought?
8. This said the men on Shinar's plain
Shall reach to heaven, but all in vain.
9. Where saith Paul God's Spirit must
Abide, to quicken mortal dust?
10. What king Samaria's hill did buy,
And set a city there on high?
11. What cereal did two kings arrange
For cedar timbers to exchange?
12. Two letters, last of Hebrew name,
"The Lord our Righteousness" the same.
13. This "not for me," our Lord did cry,
But "for yourselves," and progeny.
14. Of whom did Jesus say, though small
Her gift is great, for 'tis her "all"?
15. What maid, with answered prayer elate,
For joy forgot to open a gate?
16. This Jesus called Himself, and He
Alone can open for you and me.
17. This did become a serpent when
God's word was spurned by sinful men.

The initials and the finals place
And you a promised good may trace
First given to Judah's remnant. Yet
We may each one some lesson get.

A CHAPTER OF SCRIPTURE.

NO. II.

This chapter contains the account of two miracles: one is mentioned only in this gospel, the other in only one beside. After working the first, we are told that Jesus "marvelled." It took place in a city which was "exalted to heaven," and which is "upon the sea-coast." The other miracle was wrought the following day, and seems to have been the first of its kind; a similar one is recorded in the following chapter. "There came a fear on all" who saw it, and the people were sure that "a great prophet" had risen up among them; the story of the wonder spreading far and wide, even reaching a solitary prisoner on the shore of the Dead Sea. The place where it occurred is mentioned nowhere else. An account is given of two messengers coming to Jesus, to ask a question. The man who sent them had once said to the soldiers, "Be content with your wages," and the people had "mused in their hearts" of him. In one verse we are told of many miracles being wrought on the sick and the blind, and afterwards our Lord sends a message, and speaks to the people of one who is elsewhere compared to Elijah. The publicans received his words, but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected them; Jesus next speaks of children at play, and of the evil things men said of Himself. The chapter closes with a beautiful story only related in this gospel, though a very similar incident, occurring two years after, is given by the other three evangelists. Some details are alike in the two stories; but, excepting Jesus, the characters are all different. The common name of "Simon," however, occurs in both, but one is, or has been "a leper," the other is "a Pharisee." The place, too, is not the same. In this story we find Jesus giving a short parable, and then speaking words of reproof and of praise. The last words are those of forgiveness and peace.

L. T.